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RUEHZN/ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE
RUEHRC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHINGTON DC
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC
RUEHC/DEPT OF INTERIOR WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RHMFIUU/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI

UNCLAS HANOI 001352

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/MLS, EAP/EP, OES/EGC, OES/STC
STATE ALSO FOR T (JWOLCOTT, MHUMPHREY), ISN/NESS
(ABURKART,PMCNERNEY), ISN/RA (RBEISECKER) AND EAP/MLS
STATE PASS TO NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION (KFOGGIE,
JMCLELLAND-KERR, SBURNS)
ENERGY FOR DOE/NE (EMCGINNIS, CWELLING), NNSA/NA-21 (SFRAZER, KAPT,
DKOVACIC, SDICKERSON, IBOLSHINSKY, SMOSES, ABIENIAWSKI)
COMMERCE PLEASE PASS TO USTDA (DROSSITER)
COMMERCE FOR ITA/MAC/HONG-PHONG PHO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SENV](#) [ENRG](#) [ECON](#) [KGHG](#) [VM](#)

SUBJECT: VIETNAM MAKES PROGRESS ON NUCLEAR MOU

Ref: A. HANOI 1267 B. HANOI 1048 C. HANOI 966

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¶1. Summary: Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) Officials told ESTHoff that the Government of Vietnam (GVN) was making progress on consideration of the proposed bilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on nuclear cooperation and provided initial feedback. MOST wants to wrap up the MOU first and then turn its attention to joining the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP). MOST Vice Minister Le Dinh Tien will be in Washington in early January and would like to meet with Department of Energy officials to discuss the MOU, GNEP and final conversion of the Dalat nuclear research reactor. End Summary.

Nuclear MOU Winding Its Way Through GVN Bureaucracy

¶2. (SBU) On December 12, MOST Deputy Director of International Cooperation Le Thanh Binh met with ESTHoff to review the proposed MOU "Concerning Cooperation in Nuclear Energy and Other Energy Fields" (Refs A, B, and C). Binh stated that MOST had submitted the document to the Ministries of Industry and Trade (MOIT), Foreign Affairs (MFA), Justice (MOJ), Defense (MOD), and Public Security (MPS) for inter-agency review. Following consensus, the document will go to the Prime Minister for approval. Though MOST initially had set a deadline of mid-November, prior to Deputy Prime Minister Hoang Trung Hai's visit to Washington, to date only MOJ and MOIT have responded. Binh lamented their inability to get bigger, more powerful ministries such as MOD and MPS to respond promptly.

Initial GVN Comments on MOU

¶3. (SBU) While waiting for final comments from the ministries listed above, Binh provided initial feedback on the draft text of the MOU. MOST's only suggested edit was removal of the paragraph affirming Vietnam's intent to rely on existing markets for nuclear fuel services. Binh noted that Vietnam planned to purchase fuel from the entity it selects to construct planned nuclear power plants. As a stepping stone to the negotiation of a Section 123 Agreement, the GVN did not feel this MOU needed to address nuclear fuel services.

ESTHoff noted the importance of this paragraph to U.S. non-proliferation goals, but promised to forward comments to U.S. substantive experts.

MOU First, GNEP Second

14. (SBU) Binh stated that MOST was focusing first on the bilateral nuclear cooperation MOU. While MOST had held vigorous internal discussions on the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP), it did not want to move forward until it had finalized the MOU, which Binh described as "easier." MOST will need to run membership in GNEP through the same gauntlet of ministries listed in paragraph one above.

MOST Vice Minister Wants to Meet with DOE in January

15. (SBU) According to Binh, MOST Vice Minister Le Dinh Tien, whose portfolio contains nuclear energy, will be in Washington from January 2 to 7 to attend the Vietnam Education Foundation conference. Tien would like to meet with the Department of Energy to discuss a range of energy issues including DOE/NNSA Deputy Assistant Secretary Andrew Bieniawski's request to begin discussions next February regarding full conversion of the Dalat nuclear research reactor and removal of spent Highly Enriched Uranium fuel. Tien would also like to discuss GNEP and the nuclear cooperation MOU. Tien has set aside January 6 or 7 for meetings, but might also have some time earlier in his stay.

MICHALAK